



TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**Jai Templeton
Commissioner**

**Consumer and Industry
Services**

FACT SHEET – SMALL EGG PROCESSOR

What is a small egg operator?

A farmer that is engaged in the operation of egg production who maintains annually less than three thousand birds and wishes to sell the resulting eggs from a location other than from the premises where the eggs are produced (i.e. a registered farmer's market or through a retail store or restaurant). Keep in mind; if the processor maintains less than three thousands birds, but only sells eggs from their farm, they are not required to register. Additionally, if the processor maintains over three thousand birds, they must register as a large egg processor.

What are the requirements for labeling egg products?

Egg cartons are not to be recycled or re-used. A small egg processor has the same labeling requirements as a large egg processor. The requirements for carton labeling are:

1. The name and address of the farmer
2. An accurate statement of the quantity of the contents in terms of numerical count (i.e.12 ea., one dozen)
3. The date the shell eggs were packed into the egg carton
4. Labeled "ungraded" or "unclassified"
5. On the outside or the inside of the carton lid, the safe handling statement is to be printed.

SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: To prevent illness from bacteria, keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.

Where may small egg processors sell their eggs?

You can sell properly labeled eggs without an inspection only if you sell them from your farm or at a registered farmer's market that you own/operate. However, to sell eggs from a flock of less than 3000 laying hens to a retailer, restaurant or to a registered farmer's market, the processor must be permitted by Tennessee Department of Agriculture and USDA.

What does permitting involve?

TDA will inspect the farm to determine that the labeling requirement for eggs is being done; that the eggs are cleaned and kept refrigerated at a temperature not exceeding 41°F; and that a private well system if used is tested and shown to be free of coliforms at least once annually.

How much does permitting cost?

All persons making application for an egg permit shall furnish with the application sufficient records or information of the previous year's transactions of eggs to establish a basis for issuance of the permit application filed. (0-1,000 cases \$10; 1,001-5,000 \$25.00; 5,001 on up \$50; processor and wholesaler \$50 ;) (30 dozen or 360 eggs to a case)